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# THE REDDICK MANSION

At Ottawa Illinois



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THE WILLIAM REDDICK MANSION AT OTTAWA, ILLINOIS





INTERIOR OF THE REDDICK MANSION AT OTTAWA, ILLINOIS





WILLIAM REDDICK







ELIZA COLLINS REDDICK



HISTORY, SIGNIFICANCE, AND FEASIBILITY FOR ADAPTIVE USE  
OF THE  
WILLIAM REDDICK MANSION  
AT  
OTTAWA, ILLINOIS

prepared for  
The National Trust for Historic Preservation  
and the  
Ottawa Silica Company Foundation

By

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January, 1975



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## INTRODUCTION

This study was commissioned by the Ottawa Silica Company Foundation and The National Trust for Historic Preservation to generate public support for the preservation and public use of the Ottawa residence of William Reddick. The question of finding a feasible adaptive use for the residence, which has housed the Ottawa public library since Reddick's death in the 1880's, arose because the Library Board decided to build and move to a new library building, now completed.

The consultants, selected by the contractors, were asked to establish the historical significance of William Reddick, who willed the residence to Ottawa for a public library, and the architectural significance of the building itself. They were also commissioned to determine the present physical condition of the building and to suggest the most feasible ownership and adaptive use of the Reddick mansion in order to preserve and operate it in the public interest.

Funding for this study comes partly from a Consultant Service Grant provided by The National Trust for Historic Preservation and partly from the Ottawa Silica Company Foundation. The consultants wish to thank members of the Reddick Mansion Association, the director and staff of the Ottawa Reddick Library, City officials, and numerous other private individuals for their cooperation.



## SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of William Reddick's prominence in the early history of Ottawa and Illinois, and the important position occupied by his residence in the history of architecture in the state, it is imperative that the Reddick mansion be preserved for present and future generations. As one of Ottawa's most respected farmers, statesmen, businessmen, and philanthropists, Reddick is assured an esteemed place in state and local history. For this reason his house, one of the most substantial and original Italiante residences in Illinois, is an especially significant part of the cultural heritage of the state. To preserve this fine building as a monument to William Reddick and as a symbol of the nineteenth-century ideals on which this country rose to world leadership, is thus the only feasible and appropriate course of action.

With this in mind, the consultants recommend rehabilitating the Reddick mansion for continued use in the public interest. Because of the excellent structural condition of the mansion, the projected costs of rehabilitation are sufficiently low to make continued use feasible. In addition to carrying out ordinary periodic maintenance: painting, tuck-pointing and re-roofing, it will be necessary to replace numerous interior walls removed for library purposes, install new toilet facilities, and add a small serving kitchen.

In the judgment of the consultants, the corporation best suited to rehabilitate and operate the building in the public

interest is the Reddick Mansion Association. As significant financial benefits may accrue to the mansion if owned by the municipality, the consultants recommend that if feasible, the City of Ottawa acquire the building and lease it for a long term to the Reddick Mansion Association for operation as a public facility. If municipal ownership is not possible, then the consultants recommend that the Board convey the Reddick mansion property and improvements to the Reddick Mansion Association, a not-for-profit corporation. Because the annual operating cost is likely to be fairly high and because funds will be needed for restoring parts of the mansion, the consultants suggest that the Association sublease certain specified spaces in the house to organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce and the United Fund. The remaining space should be made available to non-profit groups for meetings, exhibitions, receptions, dinners, dances, card parties, and the like. Fees should not be assessed for these activities except when the sponsoring organization makes a charge, or when extraordinary utilities or custodial service is anticipated. The consultants also recommend that the Reddick Mansion Association restore one room as a period room and provide public access and interpretation at specified hours.

If the Reddick mansion is rehabilitated and made available for public use, the consultants believe the Association will be able to raise from local, state and federal sources, those funds required to operate the building. Ownership and operation of the Reddick mansion as proposed in this report will thus



preserve for the citizens of Ottawa and Illinois an exceedingly valuable part of their cultural heritage while at the same time making available to the entire community a useful and needed public facility as a continuing memorial to William Reddick.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction. . . . .	xi
Summary of Recommendations. . . . .	.xiii
Part One:     The Life and Significance of William Reddick .	1
Part Two:     The Residence of William Reddick and its Architectural Significance . . . . .	17
Part Three:   Description and Present Physical Condition of the Reddick Mansion . . . . .	41
Part Four:    Proposed Adaptive Use of the Reddick Mansion .	59
Maps and Plans	
Property Map . . . . .	33
Site Plan. . . . .	35
Plans Showing Original Arrangement of Interiors. . . .	37
Plans Showing Interior Changes . . . . .	53
Plans Showing Proposed Arrangement and Use of Interiors. . . . .	75



## PART ONE

### THE LIFE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF WILLIAM REDDICK

#### Early Life

William Reddick was born October 31, 1812<sup>1</sup> in the town of Ballynahinch, County Down, now Northern Ireland. His father, James Reddick, was an Irish Presbyterian "of the most excellent character," who "was earnest in securing for his children not only a sound moral training, but as thorough an education as his means would permit."<sup>2</sup> Reddick brought his family to America in 1816,<sup>3</sup> settling first in New Jersey and shortly thereafter, in Zanesville, Ohio, where he worked at the salt works.<sup>4</sup> In autumn of 1821, when William was nine years old, his father died leaving his wife with William and four other sons and a daughter. Mrs. Reddick, Bessie, survived her husband by only a few years, dying at Wheeling, West Virginia, in 1828. The sons were James (born 1814, died at Ottawa, October 12, 1847); John (died in Texas 1849); Joseph (died in California, 1870); and David, of LaSalle (born August 1, 1810), who survived his brother William. The sister was Mrs. James Stanley (died at Birmingham, Alabama, February 5, 1884).

In 1825, William Reddick, having reached the age of fourteen, was apprenticed as a glass and hollow-ware blower at Wheeling and Wellsburg, West Virginia, his compensation reported as \$4 a month.<sup>5</sup> Two years later, William moved to nearby Brownsville in Fayette County, Pennsylvania, where, at the age

of 16, he was apprenticed on November 10, 1828, to W. P. Campbell for a period of 2 years, 2 months, and 2 days, to learn to blow window glass.<sup>6</sup> When the apprenticeship ended, William, then 18 years old, married Eliza Jane Collins of Brownsville,<sup>7</sup> where he continued to work in the glass industry. Mrs. Reddick, evidently several years his senior, was born at Brownsville in August 1810.<sup>8</sup>

The Reddicks moved to Washington, D. C., in 1832 where for two years William continued in the glass blowing business. While in Washington "he made a sturdy effort to acquire a substantial education. He studied during the evenings and during the long period when the fires of the glass works remained extinguished."<sup>9</sup> While working in Washington, Reddick managed to save the substantial sum of \$1000. In 1834, he and his wife returned to Brownsville, Pennsylvania.<sup>10</sup>

### Political Career

Having decided to take up farming, Reddick and his wife left Brownsville in the spring of 1835 and settled on property purchased in Section 11 of Bruce Township, LaSalle County, Illinois. Section 11 is one section east and four sections north of Streator.<sup>11</sup> Reddick did not remain a farmer long, for in 1838 he was elected County Sheriff and moved to Ottawa, the county seat. Although reluctant to become sheriff, for which it is reported Reddick did not campaign, he agreed to serve and the citizens of the County elected him by a large majority and continued to return him to the office every two years until 1846 when he became a state senator.<sup>12</sup>

The circumstances of Reddick's draft as sheriff, recounted in several places, give some idea of his character:<sup>13</sup>

In 1838, Ottawa was infested with a gang of trouble-makers, employees of the canal contractors. The question arose as to who was the best man to deal with these men in the capacity of sheriff. Wash[ington] Armstrong, a political leader in those days, suggested that William Reddick would fill the bill. He was big, powerful, and fearless. Accordingly Mr. Armstrong went out to the Reddick farm to see Mr. Reddick. He was found working in a field, barefooted. His wife was also working in the field. When the suggestion was made that Mr. Reddick should become a candidate for the office of sheriff, he ridiculed the idea. He said that he was not well enough educated, and offered many reasons why he would not make a good county official. But Mr. Armstrong insisted, and Mr. Reddick finally consented. He made no fight for the office, but was elected by a large majority.

Evidently Reddick was also made county collector at the time he became sheriff. According to his obituary in the Ottawa Free Trader, "The office of collector in those days was of much more consequence than that of sheriff, and the times being 'hard' [Panic of 1837], Mr. Reddick no doubt laid the foundation of much of his large personal popularity by his kindly advances he had made to hard-up taxpayers."<sup>14</sup>

There are reports that Reddick was a state land appraiser, but this remains unconfirmed.<sup>15</sup> A letter by him written in 1841, which speaks of surveying land on the Rock River, lends support to the idea.<sup>16</sup> These reports may, however, refer to Reddick's appointment in 1848 by State authorities as one of the Illinois and Michigan Canal appraisers.<sup>17</sup>

Several references in the Ottawa Republican, reprinted in 1914, illuminate Reddick's career as sheriff and collector:

December 7, 1838: On this day Sheriff William Reddick presented an account [to the County Commissioners] for work done on the courthouse. . . .<sup>18</sup>

June 2, 1840: [the Circuit Court] ordered that William Reddick, collector, be allowed with the next term of the court, to make settlement for the tax collected by him, for the reason that the sale of lots and lands has not been completed.<sup>19</sup>

October, 1841: The old courthouse was advertised to be sold at public auction by Sheriff William Reddick. . . on the afternoon of October 21, 1841.<sup>20</sup>

In 1846 Reddick was elected state senator from his district, the term beginning in 1847. The Illinois Constitution of 1848, which changed the election of state senators to coincide in date with federal elections caused Reddick's second term, which began in 1849, to be extended by two years so it did not expire until<sup>21</sup> 1852.

In that year Reddick ran unsuccessfully for Congress from the 3rd District of Illinois.<sup>22</sup> His plurality of 332 votes in La Salle County proved insufficient to carry the district which he lost to Jessie O. Norton by 147 votes.<sup>23</sup> Thus began the decline of Reddick's political fortunes. He ran for Congress again in 1854,<sup>24</sup> but did not even get on the ticket. In 1854, the new Republican Party carried many offices in Ottawa including Congressional, and Reddick, had he been slated, might well have been defeated again.



That he remained staunchly Democratic in the face of overwhelming Republicanism, meant the end of his political career. He held state office only one more time when, during the Democratic year of 1870, he was again elected state senator for two years.<sup>25</sup> Reddick's affection for the Democratic Party is revealed in the often-quoted words of Reddick when his health began to fail: "'Well, this will be a good time to die -- under a Democratic administration,' and he expired six days after the inauguration of Grover Cleveland. . . ." <sup>26</sup> At Reddick's death the Ottawa Free Trader had this to say about his unfulfilled political ambitions:

Having been all his life an active Democrat, his politics for the last 24 years were no doubt the chief bar to his higher political advancement, and he was mentioned in connection with Congress, the governorship, U.S. Senator, etc., positions which, no doubt, he would easily have attained but for the minority condition of the Democratic Party.<sup>27</sup>

Some notices of Reddick's activities during his political years follow:

In September, 1841, Reddick was among 19 persons who voted at the first election of officers when the Village of Ottawa was incorporated.<sup>28</sup> In the legislature of 1849, he opposed a bill preventing free Negroes from settling in Illinois. When it passed, 13 to 12, he proposed that the title of the legislation be changed to "An Act for a Crusade by a Christian State Against Negroes."<sup>29</sup> In 1850, Reddick attended the Democratic Congressional Convention at Joliet that nominated R. S. Molony.<sup>30</sup> Reddick was later reported to be "another of Judge Douglas' friends who stood

on the stand with him at Ottawa" during the Lincoln-Douglas debate of August 21, 1858.<sup>31</sup> Finally there is the notice in the Ottawa Free Trader of February 11, 1860, that the "first regular meeting of the Democratic Club came off Saturday evening, February 4, with the Honorable William Reddick, President, presiding."

### Education and Temperance

Reddick's interest in bringing the advantages of education to persons who, like himself, had been forced to educate themselves, is evident from the bequest by which he gave his home to Ottawa as a public library:

Deprived of the advantages of early educational training, it became a purpose which grew with his years, so to apply his fortune that the people, especially the young people of Ottawa, whose circumstances in life are like those of his own early youth, might at least have access to books, to better equip themselves for the duties of work and life.<sup>32</sup>

As early as 1851, Reddick was at work promoting education. In November of that year he served with Professor J. B. Turner of Jacksonville, Illinois, as a vice president of the Granville Convention. There Professor Turner "first proposed the plan for establishing higher institutions of scientific industrial learning by federal aid, a plan which laid the foundation of the University of Illinois and all the land-grant colleges of the nation."<sup>33</sup>

Reddick was also involved in organizing a free public

school system in Ottawa. The first steps were taken January 13, 1854, at a citizens' meeting in the courthouse. There a committee of nine persons, including Reddick, was constituted to prepare a plan for a school program. This committee recommended the establishment of free graded schools and, subsequently, a law permitting such schools in Ottawa was passed by the state legislature.<sup>34</sup>

Although not credited in standard sources with introducing the Illinois enabling legislation permitting municipalities to maintain public libraries, it is probable that Reddick was deeply involved in getting the bill through the legislature. This act, passed March 7, 1872, during the second year of Reddick's last year in the state senate, authorizing cities "to establish and maintain free public libraries and reading rooms," provided the legal mechanism by which the Reddick home was later converted for use as a public library.

It was also during his second term as state senator that Reddick came especially to be associated with the temperance movement. According to his biography of 1875:

In 1870 the Democrats of his section, who had never been able to elect their candidates since Mr. Reddick had withdrawn from politics and engaged exclusively in private pursuits, now cast about for a standard-bearer who it was possible to place in office. The temperance people, likewise in the minority, were looking about for the same purpose. Mr. Reddick, a plain, hard-working, upright citizen, firmly grounded in the principles of temperance and standing in the very best repute in the county, was the only man who could successfully lead a forlorn hope against strong opponents.<sup>35</sup>

Reddick succeeded during this short two-year term to have enacted in 1872 a temperance law which limited the sale of liquor and became known as "Reddick's Temperance Law."<sup>36</sup>

### Reddick the Businessman

After the precipitous decline in his political fortunes, Reddick opened in 1854 a store for general merchandise in Ottawa under the name of Reddick & Hurlbut.<sup>37</sup> The firm continued until 1856 when Hurlbut withdrew. After that, Reddick operated the store alone. In the LaSalle County Directory of 1858-59, Reddick is listed as: "dry goods, etc., Reddick's blk, Court; h. Lafayette cor Columbus." In 1868, perhaps because he was planning to run again for the state legislature, Reddick took Hugh B. J. Gillen into partnership as Reddick & Gillen. In May, 1873, Reddick sold his interest in the business to Gillen and retired at age 60.<sup>38</sup>

Although thus engaged in the dry goods business for 20 years, it is unlikely Reddick made his fortune in this business. His magnificent residence, begun in 1856, is ample evidence that Reddick was already wealthy by 1854 when he opened the dry goods store. Instead, it was probably through real estate transactions that Reddick amassed his fortune. In 1876, according to the Warner and Beers Atlas of LaSalle County, Reddick owned 57.38 acres in the first ward of Ottawa, 115.25 acres in section 16 and 29.18 acres in section 17 of Ottawa township, and 80 acres in section 5 of Bruce township, and it is likely that these properties were not all of his real estate holdings.

According to Reddick's 1875 biography, he "is now, as he has ever been since his advent in LaSalle County, an agriculturalist on a very large scale, owning and conducting several large and very fine farms in various townships."<sup>39</sup>

No doubt because of his reputed frugality, Reddick was able to save enough money in the early years to take advantage of government land sales at low prices. The rapid increase in land values during the 1840's would be more than enough to explain Reddick's affluence by the 1850's. That he was also county collector and a land appraiser could only have helped. In 1877, Reddick's fortune was listed as \$300,000.<sup>40</sup>

In the 1860's Reddick was associated with several public enterprises of a commercial nature. In 1863, he was one of the incorporators of a company chartered to build a hotel in Ottawa.<sup>41</sup> In 1867, the state legislature constituted William Reddick and four other persons a board of commissioners to organize a company to dam the Fox and Illinois Rivers for water power. The dams, both finished in 1871, were washed away in floods the following spring.<sup>42</sup> In 1869, Reddick served on a commission to acquire the toll bridges across the Illinois and Fox Rivers. When one of the bridges fell and had to be rebuilt, Reddick became President of the Illinois River Bridge Company.<sup>43</sup> He was also one of the founders of the Ottawa Glass Works.<sup>44</sup>

#### Reddick's Passing and Funeral

Reddick's wife, Eliza Collins Reddick, died July 5, 1883,<sup>45</sup> and he followed her not two years later, on March 8, 1885.<sup>46</sup>



Although childless, the Reddicks were survived by an adopted daughter, Elizabeth Burrier Funk Reddick. She was born in Prussia November 10, 1840, the daughter of Franz Joseph Funk. When Funk's wife died about 1852, he was left with two small children, John and Elizabeth. On learning that the Reddicks wished to adopt a child, and being unable to give his daughter proper care, Funk assented to the Reddicks' wishes and placed Elizabeth with them.<sup>47</sup>

At his death, Reddick left his home to the city of Ottawa as a library together with an endowment of approximately \$100,000 for its maintenance. He also left 100 acres of farm land to LaSalle County as an addition to their farm in support of the poor.

According to the Ottawa Republican of March 13, 1885, Reddick's funeral was one of the largest ever seen in Ottawa.

The services were conducted by Reverend M. K. Whittlesy [Congregational pastor of Ottawa] and Reverend G. S. Young [Methodist pastor of Elgin] who, when pastor of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Ottawa, was a warm friend of the deceased. At the conclusion of the services a procession was formed, Judge Evans, Sheriff Milligan, and C. D. Tumble of Ottawa; Honorable Elmer Baldwin of Farm Ridge, Colonel Plumb of Streator, A. M. Vaughey of Seneca, and S. M. Heslet of Mendota, acting as pallbearers. Company D and the fire department marched at the head. Following the hearse were carriages containing Ottawa and LaSalle relatives, Judges of the Supreme and Circuit Courts, trustees and officers of the Kankakee Asylum, members of the Board of Supervisors, the City Council, old residents and citizens of LaSalle County.<sup>48</sup>

The Reddick monument at Ottawa Avenue Cemetery marks the graves

of William and Eliza Reddick, Elizabeth Funk Reddick [adopted daughter], James Reddick [brother of William], Mary Sterns Collins Bowen [sister of Eliza], and Virginia E. Gray [niece of William].

### Reddick's Significance

Thus ended the remarkable career of a man who should be accorded a foremost place among Ottawa's most distinguished citizens of all time. Serving as one of the earliest and best remembered sheriffs of LaSalle County, and as state senator for nearly a decade, Reddick became a political giant in his time. Were it not for his continued dedication to the Democratic party Reddick might well have fulfilled his ambitions to become governor of Illinois and U.S. Senator.

Even after the decline of his political fortunes, Reddick continued to be active in civic affairs. His work on behalf of free public education - aimed at assisting young persons who, like himself, might otherwise be deprived of a complete education - reached its finale in his last bequest. The gift of his residence to the City of Ottawa for use as a public library, together with a substantial endowment -- the two worth well over \$1,000,000 in today's money -- have made Reddick one of Ottawa's best-known and most respected benefactors.

Certainly there is no question that this self-made man, William Reddick, -- farmer, statesman, businessman and philanthropist -- deserves a place of honor in the Ottawa Valhalla.





## NOTES

1. "Hon. William Reddick," The Biographical Encyclopedia of Illinois of the Nineteenth Century, Philadelphia, 1875, p. 293.
2. Ibid.
3. According to A. J. Reddick, quoted in Ottawa: Old and New, A Complete History of Ottawa, 1823-1914, Ottawa: The Republican Times, 1912-14, James Reddick "became a citizen of Bedford, Pennsylvania, in 1918, he having come to America a few years before his family."
4. "Hon. William Reddick," op. cit.
5. Ibid.
6. Indenture preserved in Reddick's Library.
7. Although Reddick is said to have married in 1830, it is likely the marriage did not take place until 1831 as the terms of his apprentice agreement would have prevented him from marrying until January or February, 1831.
8. The date is from the Reddick monument in Ottawa Avenue Cemetery.
9. "Hon. William Reddick," op. cit.
10. Ottawa: Old and New.
11. According to the Warner and Beers Atlas of LaSaSalle County, in 1876 Reddick owned 80 acres in Section 5 of Bruce Township.
12. The following results of elections in which Reddick ran are found in The History of LaSalle County, Illinois, Chicago: Interstate Publishing Co., 1886, 2 vols., I, 276:

### Election of Aug 3, 1840 - Sheriff

Reddick	2093
Walker	511
Hidden	24

### Election of Aug 8, 1842 - Sheriff

Reddick	888
Potter	655

Election of Aug 5, 1844 - Sheriff

Reddick	754
Hoffman	446
Leonard	368
Kelsey	94
Maclay	33

Election of Aug 3, 1846 - State Senator

Reddick	1443
Mason	553
Champlin	200

Election of Nov 2, 1852 - U.S. Representative

William Reddick	1653
Jesse O. Norton	1321
John H. Bryant	465

13. Ottawa Old and New.
14. Ottawa Free Trader, March 14, 1885.
15. Ottawa Old and New.
16. Original at the State Historical Library, Springfield.
17. "Hon. William Reddick," op. cit., p. 294; Ottawa Free Trader, March 14, 1885.
18. Ottawa: Old and New, p. 27.
19. Ibid., p. 30.
20. Ibid., p. 20.
21. No figures are given in the 1886 History of LaSalle County, op. cit., for the state senatorial election of 1848.
22. This was the Thirty-third Congress, ibid., p. 151.
23. Information kindly supplied by a member of the Reddick Mansion Association.
24. Ottawa Republican, February 4, 1854, and Ottawa: Old and New, p. 40.
25. Several sources maintain that Reddick served in both houses of the Illinois Legislature, but there seems to be no documentary evidence to support the assertion. The earliest source of this apparent error is Elmer Baldwin, History of LaSalle County, Illinois, 1877, p. 345.

26. Michael O'Byrne, History of LaSalle County, 3 vols., 1924, II, 266.
27. Ottawa Free Trader, Mar. 14, 1885
28. Ottawa Republican, Sept. 21, 1841, as quoted in Ottawa: Old and New.
29. Senate Journal, 1849, p. 271, as quoted in Transactions of the Illinois State Historical Society, 1904, pp. 427-28.
30. Edwin Erle Sparks, ed., "The Lincoln-Douglas Debates of 1858," Collections of the Illinois State Historical Library, III, 238.
31. Ibid., p. 239.
32. Finding List of the Reddick's Public Library of Ottawa, Illinois, 1896, p. v.
33. Dean M. Inman, "Professor Jonathan Baldwin Turner and the Granville Convention," Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society, XVII (April, 1924 to Jan., 1925), 148.
34. History of LaSalle County, 1886, I, 495.
35. "Hon. William Reddick," op. cit., p. 294.
36. Obituary, Mar. 8, 1885, unidentified newspaper clipping.
37. "Hon. William Reddick," op. cit., p. 294; the firm is listed in the Illinois State Directory of 1854, p. 67.
38. "Hon. William Reddick," op. cit., p. 294.
39. Ibid.
40. The Past and Present of LaSalle County, Illinois, 1877, p. 379.
41. Ottawa Republican Times, Mar. 7, 1863; in Ottawa: Old and New, p. 63.
42. History of LaSalle County, 1886, I, 481-82; also The Past and Present of LaSalle County, Illinois, 1877, p. 283.
43. "Hon. William Reddick," op. cit., p. 294.
44. Ibid.
45. According to the Reddick Monument, Ottawa Avenue Cemetery.

46. The date of March 10, 1885, given for Reddick's death in Ottawa: Old and New and repeated by C. C. Tisler, Story of Ottawa, 1953, is erroneous; see the unidentified Chicago newspaper clipping at the Chicago Historical Society dated March 8: "The Hon. William Reddick. . .died at his residence this morning. . . .; and also the Press Release, dated Sept. 18, 1958, in manuscript at Reddick's Library.
47. This information kindly supplied by Robert Funk.
48. As quoted in Ottawa: Old and New.

## PART TWO

### THE RESIDENCE OF WILLIAM REDDICK AND ITS ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

#### The Reddick Mansion

It was in 1855 that William Reddick contracted with the architectural firm of Olmsted & Nicholson for a large residence to be built at Ottawa, Illinois. The contract, casually reported in the Annual Review of the Commerce, Railroads, and Manufacturers of Chicago for the Year 1855, reads: "Improvements Contracted For by Olmsted & Nicholson, Architects -- Brick and stone residence at Ottawa, Illinois, for Wm. Reddick, to cost \$25,000."<sup>1</sup>

Reddick had purchased the property, lots 10 and 11 in block 56 of the States addition to Ottawa, on October 17, 1851.<sup>2</sup> It well may be that Reddick, flushed with his political successes as Sheriff and State Senator, and about to run in 1852 for Congress, looked forward to a prestigious residence commensurate with the offices to which he is said to have aspired: U.S. Representative, U.S. Senator, and Governor of Illinois. Yet even though thwarted in his attempts to fulfill these political ambitions, beginning with his try for Congress in 1852, Reddick evidently did not immediately give up all hope for ultimate success.

Thus in 1856 he contracted for the design and construction of a palatial residence on the corner of Lafayette and Columbus

in Ottawa. The house was probably begun in the spring of 1856 for by the late summer of that year the Ottawa Free Trader was able to report that "the residence of Mr. Reddick, just passing the first story, would attract attention in any eastern city. The stone work alone about it (*sic*) will cost \$10 to \$12,000, while the whole must cost sixty or seventy thousand dollars."<sup>3</sup> But in another mention of the commission in the Annual Review for 1856 the total cost was again given as \$25,000: "Brick and Stone Residence at Ottawa for Wm. Reddick. Height 50 feet, 64 x 55 feet. \$25,000."<sup>4</sup>

Writers on Ottawa have reported widely varying figures for the cost of the house: \$17,500, over \$40,000, \$60,000, and \$80,000.<sup>5</sup> It is likely, however, that the house did indeed cost in the neighborhood of \$25,000, as reported in the Annual Review. That this was an impressive sum for a residence in 1855-56 is obvious at once from estimates given in the Annual Review's of 1854-56. A few examples will suffice: "A villa in the Italian style, South Chicago, for W.F. Myrick. One of the most superior structures of that style in the West; architects, Van Osdel & Olmsted. . .Cost \$15,000."<sup>6</sup> "The 'Bishop's Palace,' as it is called, . . .is perhaps the finest and most princely residence in our city [Chicago] . It is the residence of Rt. Reverend Dr. O'Regan of this city [the Catholic Bishop of Chicago]. Cost \$22,000. . .Van Osdel & Olmsted, architects." "At Michigan City, a first class Italian villa, \$18,000. Van Osdel & Olmsted,"<sup>7</sup> "a house for George F. Rumsey, Esquire to be built on the corner of Huron and Rush Streets, to be three stories high, with tower,

in Italian style. Walls to be of brick, with cut stone trimmings. Size 49 x 60 feet. Cost \$23,000, by Burling and Backus, architects." Even county courthouses were costing less than the Reddick mansion: Boone County Courthouse, \$10,000; Carroll County Courthouse, \$22,000; La Porte, Indiana Courthouse, \$20,000; Grundy County Courthouse, \$20,000. Only the McHenry County Courthouse cost more, \$36,000. Thus, even though the \$25,000 estimated cost of Reddick's house may be low compared to the figures given by later writers, it was in fact one of the most expensive residences constructed in the Midwest before the Civil War.

#### Olmsted & Nicolson

Although William B. Olmsted and Peter A. Nicholson were prominent Midwestern architects with much substantial work during the boom years before the Panic of 1857, they remain obscure personalities today. Even Henry Ericsson, who seemed somehow to know something about most of the architects in Chicago during the 1850's, has only this to say about Nicholson: "Peter A. Nicholson, if lost to memory as an architect, is known for the 'Nicholson pavement' first laid in Chicago on Wells Street from Lake to South Water in November 1856."<sup>8</sup> Ericsson doesn't even mention Olmsted.

What we know of these architects must, therefore, be pieced together from city directories and obscure journals. Neither Olmsted or Nicholson was listed in the Chicago directories before the one of 1855 when both appear as partners at 16 Dearborn Street. Thus it is probable that each arrived in the city between June



1853, when information for the directory of 1853 was compiled, and June 1855, when data was taken for the next biennial directory. Olmsted must have arrived between July and December 1853 for in 1853 he was already the partner of Chicago's first professional architect, John M. Van Osdel, the firm being Van Osdel and Olmsted. Among the better known buildings by that firm are the elegant Lyonsville Congregational Church, still standing, begun in March 1854; the Governor's House at Springfield, Illinois, reported being finished in 1854; the Grundy County Courthouse at Morris, Illinois; and the old St. Joseph County Courthouse at South Bend, Indiana. All their buildings in Chicago perished in the fire of 1871.

In 1854, Olmsted left Van Osdel and joined Nicholson. Van Osdel's firm then became Van Osdel & Bauman. That Olmsted & Nicholson was formed in 1854, is also confirmed by the 1854 county records in Carroll County, Illinois, which refer to the firm as architects of the elegant courthouse at Mt. Carroll. Their role as architects of that courthouse is amplified somewhat in the Annual Review of the Commerce of Chicago for 1855 where, under "Improvements Contracted For," there is listed, "a brick court house for Carroll County, Illinois, to cost \$20,000, Olmsted & Nicholson architects."<sup>9</sup> The Carroll County Courthouse is on the National Register of Historic Places and the Lyonsville Church has been nominated. Olmsted & Nicholson designed many other substantial residences, business buildings, and hotels, all of which are presently unidentified.<sup>10</sup>

Sometime in 1856, the architects went their separate ways,



with the Reddick commission going to Nicholson. Again each architect is listed in the Annual Review for 1856 with numerous substantial commissions.<sup>11</sup> It is probable that some of these were not carried out, first because of the Panic of 1857, and later because of the Civil War.

The general hiatus of building between 1856 and 1865 reduced the ranks of architects everywhere and so it was with both Nicholson and Olmsted. The latter was evidently not in Chicago during June, 1857, for he is not listed in the directory of that year. So far all attempts to discover what happened to him have failed. Nicholson formed a short-lived partnership with Theodore Wadskier in 1857, but it too was dissolved sometime in 1858. He remained in Chicago during most of the war, but left the city sometime between the directory of 1864 and the one of 1865. The only clue is contained in the Illinois State Gazateer and Business Directory for 1864-65, which lists Nicholson both in Chicago and Cairo.

Apparently Reddick's house was finished and occupied by Reddick when information for the LaSalle County Directory was gathered in June, 1858 for in the directory Reddick's home address is given as Lafayette cor Columbus.<sup>12</sup> Other reports indicate that the front steps of Reddick's house were used by persons watching the Lincoln-Douglas debate across the street in Washington Park on Saturday afternoon, August 21, 1858.<sup>13</sup> The same reports mention persons looking out of windows in the house.

## Original Arrangement of Reddick's Mansion

As the original plans are lost, it is not possible to be certain about the use of the rooms in the Reddick residence (see floor plans pp. 37-39).

Because of its position at the end of the hall, and its direct access from the basement which must have housed the kitchen, it is probable that the large room in the northeast corner was the dining room. The other superbly decorated rooms on the east side of the first floor were certainly the parlors. The three rooms opened into each other through archways that were closed with sliding doors. The main room on the west side, in being more secluded and having only a door of ordinary width connecting it with the room behind, was probably a library or reception room. At the rear of the house, immediately west of the central hall, was a servants' hall and stairs.

On the second floor there were four large rooms corresponding to the rooms below, and three smaller rooms. On the third floor there were five rooms with closets, presumably for servants but perhaps also guests.

The center hall was an elaborate spatial affair illuminated by a skylight. The skylight opened into a central hall on the third floor hall and from there its light radiated from floor to floor through an open well surrounded by elegant walnut railings.

When finished, the house had no mechanical systems as we know them today, except, perhaps, for gas lighting. The evidence of flues in the chimneys suggests that during the winter months stoves were used for heating the house, presumably removed in

the warmer months. Rooms on the third floor must always have been heated by such stoves. There were no bathrooms, of course, and no plumbing.

Three other substantial brick buildings, probably dating from the late 1860's or early 1870's,<sup>14</sup> also stood on the property (see site plan p. 35). One of them, still standing, was later a caretaker's house; its original purpose is unclear. The other two were a carriage house and a horse barn. There was also a frame house in which Reddick may have lived while his mansion was being built.

### The Reddick Will

At his death in March 1885, Reddick left his residence and the lots on which it stood to the city as a public library.<sup>15</sup> In addition, he provided a substantial endowment, quoted at between \$75,000 and \$100,000 for its maintenance.<sup>16</sup> The lots form an L-shaped tract at the corner of Columbus and Lafayette running 200 feet north on Columbus and 152 feet west on Lafayette (see property map p. 33).

Reddick left to his adopted daughter, Elizabeth Funk Reddick, the L-shaped series of lots on the northeast corner of the block (see property map p. 33). These lots, sold by her descendants in 1891,<sup>17</sup> contained the carriage, horse barn, and frame dwelling which, in thus being separated from the rest of the property, were neglected and finally demolished sometime after 1943.<sup>18</sup>

The City of Ottawa was not to receive Reddick's gift until Reddick's will had been tested in the courts. In July, 1885,

Reddick's surviving brother, David, and many of Reddick's nephews and nieces, brought suit in circuit court against the City of Ottawa, the County of LaSalle, the Directors of the Library, Elizabeth Funk Reddick, and the attorneys who had drawn the will. In the meantime, the City of Ottawa had passed on April 7, 1885,<sup>20</sup> an ordinance establishing the library and the Mayor appointed a board of directors.<sup>21</sup> In November 1885, and January, 1886, deeds not previously entered in the County Recorder's books were recorded for most of Reddick's extensive real estate holdings including the land on which his residence stands.<sup>22</sup>

Although the court eventually ruled in favor of the defendants, one of them, Elizabeth Funk Reddick, did not live to see that day. She died February 22, 1887, aged 46, from pneumonia, brought on, it is said from the strain of the trial and from sitting in the drafty courtroom in mid-winter.<sup>23</sup> The Library Board took possession of the property in the autumn of 1887 and "for nearly a year the work of putting the building into shape for a library, and arranging and cataloguing books, was carried forward."<sup>24</sup> On September 19, 1888, the library at last opened to the public.<sup>25</sup>

#### The Reddick House and Washington Park

The Reddick house faces Washington Park, laid out by the Illinois and Michigan Canal Commission in 1831 when they added their States Addition to Ottawa. Of the important and substantial structures that face the park on its north, east, and south

sides, only Reddick's house was standing when Lincoln and Douglas met for the first of their famous debates.<sup>26</sup>

The Supreme Court Building was under construction at the time, ground having been broken in May, 1857.<sup>27</sup> Construction was suspended after reaching the second story for want of funds and did not resume until July 1859, in response to an appropriation of the legislature.<sup>28</sup> By April, 1860, the building, 50 x 90 feet and costing \$29,600 was completely finished except for the wings which were added about 1870.<sup>29</sup> Reddick was one of five Ottawans appointed to a commission to supervise the erection of the court building.<sup>30</sup>

Christ Episcopal Church, begun in 1871, was probably under construction at the same time as the wings of the Supreme Court. The church, measuring 52 x 104 feet, was finished in January, 1872 at a cost of \$14,150.<sup>31</sup> The First Congregational Church was built at the same time, being dedicated March 26, 1871.<sup>32</sup> The present county jail and sheriff's residence were built at a cost of about \$29,500.<sup>33</sup> The last substantial structure built facing the park was the Masonic Temple constructed in 1910.<sup>34</sup> It replaced a frame schoolhouse.

### Significance of the Reddick Mansion

Reddick's splended Italianate mansion, measuring 55 x 64 feet and costing about \$25,000 when built in 1856-57, is thus the oldest and second most expensive (after the Appellate Court) building facing Washington Park.

The Reddick mansion is also unique in the annals of

architectural history in Illinois. Of the many Italianate residences built in Chicago before the Civil War, some of which may have been as splendid as Reddick's house, few, if any, remain. Although residences in the Italianate style abound throughout the state, it is likely that most postdate the Civil War. But whether they do or not, there is no other Italianate residence in the state having the colorful contrasts of light stone and rich red brick of the Reddick mansion. Other Italianate residences approach the Reddick house in the ornateness of their brackets and, especially in buildings after 1870, in the sumptuousness of window moldings. But the Reddick house is unusual in being a highly elaborate Italianate mansion built at a time -- only a few years after the style became popular in America -- when simplicity still governed the style.

It is also unlikely that there is another pre-Civil War house in Illinois that can match, either in quality or complexity, the ornamental plaster cornices or centerpieces of the ceilings in the Reddick mansion. In fact, it is probable that no other Italianate house in Illinois even comes close in this respect. It is also unlikely that pre-Civil War fireplaces of such high quality exist in any other residence in Illinois except Reddick's.

Although the plan with a central hall flanked by spacious rooms on either side is fairly typical as Italianate residences go, certain aspects of it are not. The polygonal bays embracing the two story porch on the east front are unique in Illinois. The bay windows are also rare in houses of this period. The full



basement above grade is also unusual, perhaps even unique for Italianate houses, as no other in Illinois comes to mind. Closest perhaps is Magnolia Manor at Cairo of 1869-71, but even there the ground floor is partly below grade.

That the Reddick mansion is also an especially high quality design seems obvious enough. This fact is supported by the high cost of its construction and by the other excellent work done in Illinois and elsewhere by its now obscure architects. That the building should seem exceptional in so many respects to a professional architectural historian who for four years has been conducting a survey of architecture in Illinois, serves to underline the great importance of the Reddick mansion for the people of Ottawa and Illinois. Given these facts, there can be little question of the extremely high architectural significance of the Reddick mansion.





## NOTES

1. P. 62
2. The deed for lot 10 (see property map p. 33) was not recorded until Jan. 1886, Book 252, p. 19, County Recorders Office. The deed for Lot 11 seems never to have been recorded.
3. Aug. 16, 1856. The date is also confirmed by notations made in the 1920's by Jason F. Richardson Jr., an Ottawa architect who remodeled the Reddick Library, and had the original plans and specifications (now lost) in his possession. Richardson's notes are in the collection of the Library.
4. P. 15.
5. Obituary, unidentified Chicago newspaper, March 8, 1885: \$60,000.00; LaSalle County History, 1886: "\$60,000.00";
6. P. 66                                      Ottawa: Old and New: "Over \$40,000.00";
7. P. 63                                      John Drury, "The Reddick House," Chicago Daily News, Nov. 13, 1942: "more than \$40,000.00"; C. C. Tisler, The Story of Ottawa, 1953, p. 25: "an \$80,000.00 mansion."
8. Henry Ericcson, Sixty Years a Builder, Chicago, 1924, p. 128.
9. P. 62.
10. For which see the Annual Review, 1855, pp. 55, 57, 61, 62.
11. Pp. 7, 9, 12, 14, 15.
12. LaSalle County Directory for 1858-59, p. 67. That information for the directory was compiled in May and June, just after commercial leases expired on May 1, is suggested by a notice in the Ottawa Republican of July 10, 1858, that an advance copy of the directory had just been received.
13. Information kindly supplied by Prof. McGinnis of Eastern Illinois University whose research was undertaken recently for a re-enactment of the Lincoln-Douglas debate at Ottawa.
14. It may be to one of these buildings that a writer for the Ottawa Republican referred when in the issue of July 4, 1869, he reported that "Reddick has improved the northeast corner of his residence lot."

15. Last Will and Testament of William Reddick, June 21, 1884.
16. Perhaps the most trustworthy estimate of the amount of the endowment is given in the Funding List of the Reddick's Public Library of 1911 where it is stated that Reddick "left his splendid home residence to be used as a library, and a permanent fund of about Seventy-Five Thousand Dollars for its maintenance, which amount under the economical management of its directors has grown to about Ninety Thousand Dollars."
17. The lots were sold March 26, 1871, by John and Mary A. Funk to Taylor Woodward, Book 287, p. 573, County Recorders Office.
18. They were standing when C. C. Tisler wrote about the residence in the Ottawa Daily Republican of Jan. 15, 1943.
19. Ottawa Free Trader, July 11, 1885.
20. Funding List, 1911.
21. George W. Watkin's, "William Reddick," pamphlet, n.d.
22. But not all of it. The deed for lot 11 does not seem to have been recorded at all.
23. Grave marker, Ottawa Avenue Cemetery; and information kindly supplied by Robert Funk.
24. Republican-Times 53rd Year Edition Dedicated to Ottawa, April, 1897, p. 20.
25. Ibid.
26. L. O. Leonard, "The William Reddick House," Rock Island Magazine, November, 1928, writes that the Lincoln-Douglas debate took place "just a few months after the home was completed." As Leonard gives no sources, one cannot be certain whether his statement, which is probably true, was guesswork or based on documentary evidence. He makes a number of other plausible statements that for the moment cannot be confirmed: "The woodwork throughout the house is solid walnut. . . .," "Double doors lead off this front room [s.e. corner] to the second parlor to the north. . . ." Leonard also seemed to know when the house was constructed for he says "it was built in 1857." On the other hand, he makes other statements that either are not, or cannot be true as for example: "It. . . cost more than \$60,000." and "Just east of this fireplace [in the room in the s.e. corner] is a circular bay window [they are

rectangular and polygonal]. . . ." Thus it is difficult to know what to believe and what not to believe in his article.

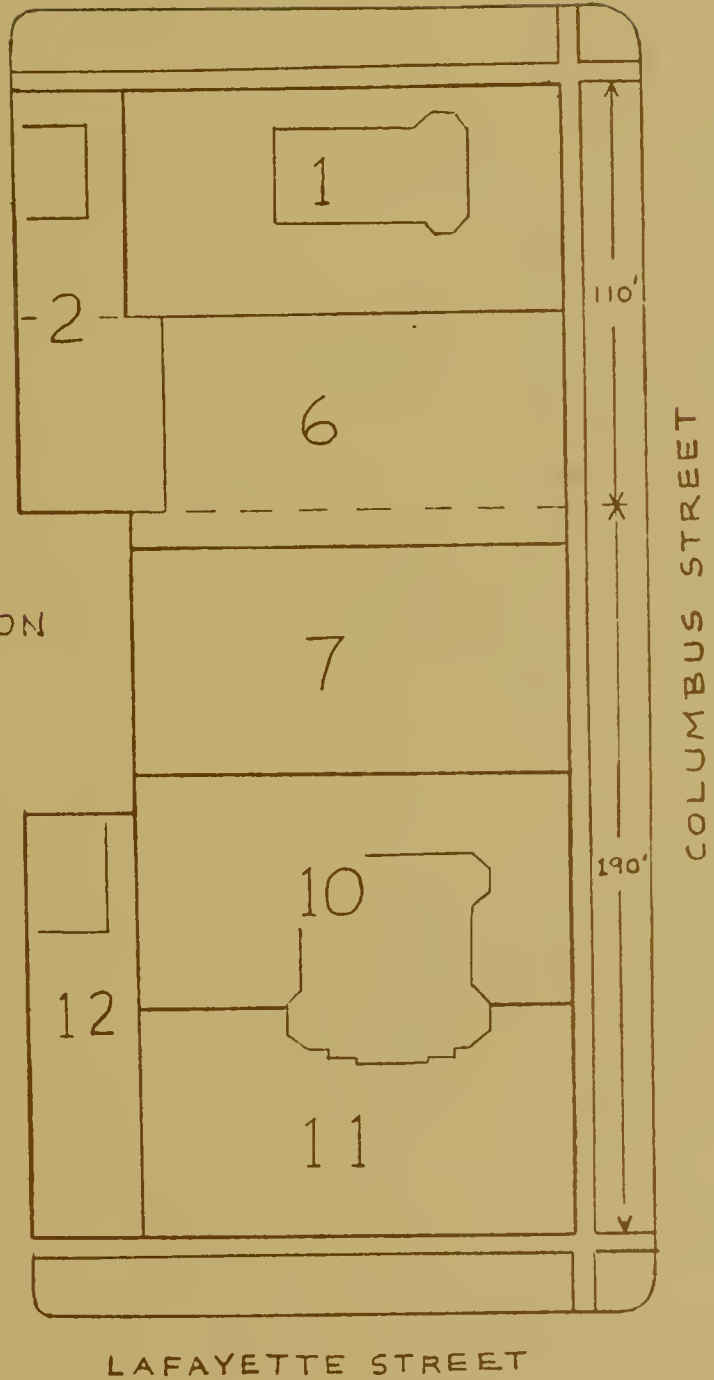
27. Ottawa Republican, May 23, 1857.
28. The Ottawa Free Trader of Feb. 12, 1858, reported that the legislature had appropriated \$14,000 to complete the building. Work was resumed in the summer of that year, Ottawa Free Trader, July 16, 1859.
29. Ottawa Free Trader, Apr. 14, 1860, reported the building finished. The total cost of \$29,600 given by C. C. Tisler, The Story of Ottawa, 1953, p. 22, agrees closely with the amount appropriated: \$16,000 in 1857 and \$14,000 in 1859. According to the LaSalle City Directory of 1872, p. 181, the wings were a "recent addition."
30. Tisler, op. cit., p. 22.
31. The Past and Present of LaSalle County, Illinois, 1877, p. 292; Souvenir of the One Hundredth Anniversary of Christ Episcopal Church, Ottawa, Illinois.
32. Constance Fetzer, ed., "Washington Park Historic District," LaSalle County Historical Society, 1974.
33. Elmer Baldwin, History of LaSalle County, 1877, p. 440; and Ottawa: Old and New, p. 20.
34. Fetzer, op. cit.



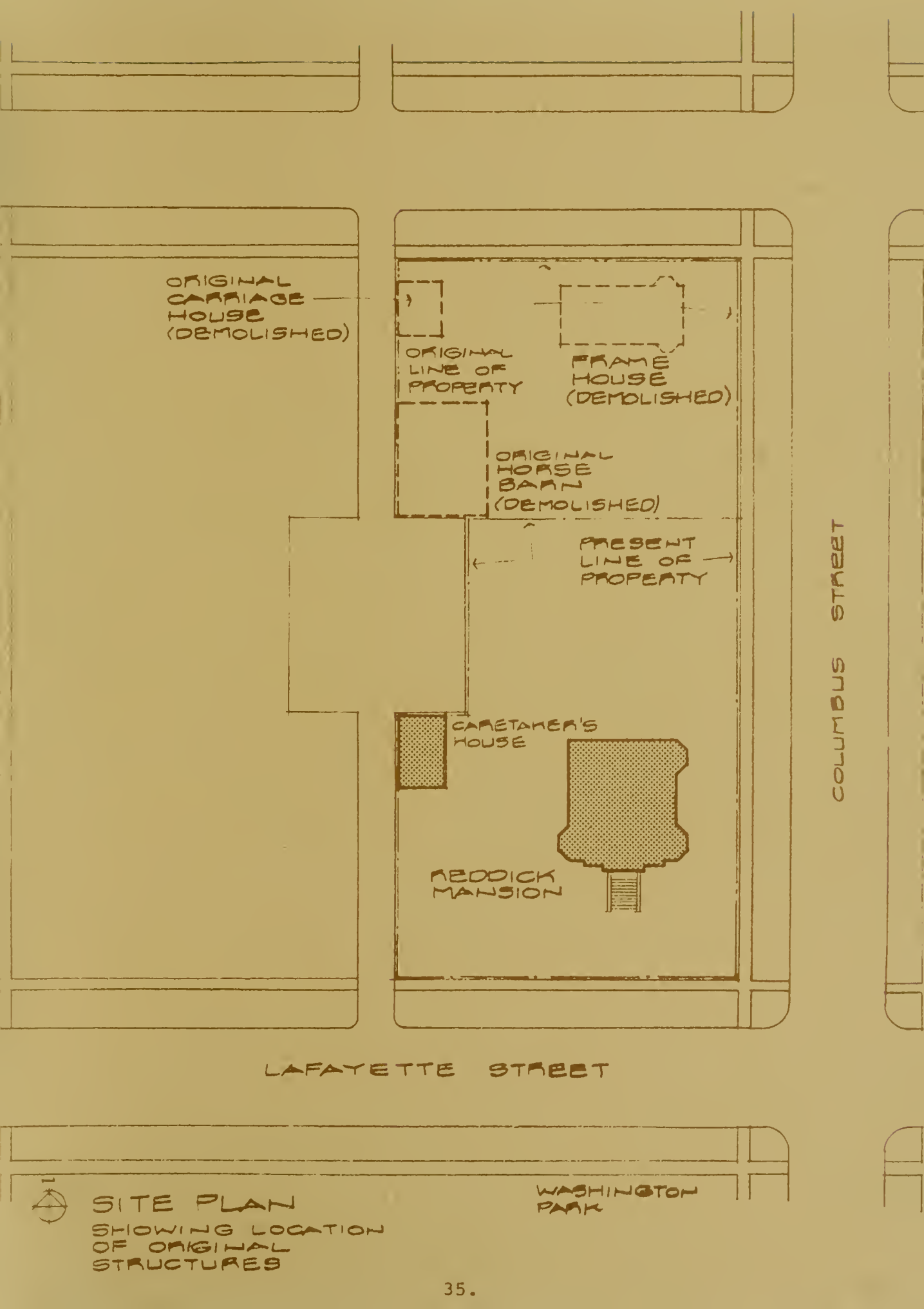


PROPERTY  
MAP

BLOCK 56  
STATES ADDITION







ORIGINAL  
CARRIAGE  
HOUSE  
(DEMOLISHED)

ORIGINAL  
LINE OF  
PROPERTY

FRAME  
HOUSE  
(DEMOLISHED)

ORIGINAL  
HORSE  
BARN  
(DEMOLISHED)

PRESENT  
LINE OF  
PROPERTY

CARETAKER'S  
HOUSE

REDDICK  
MANSION

COLUMBUS STREET

LAFAYETTE STREET

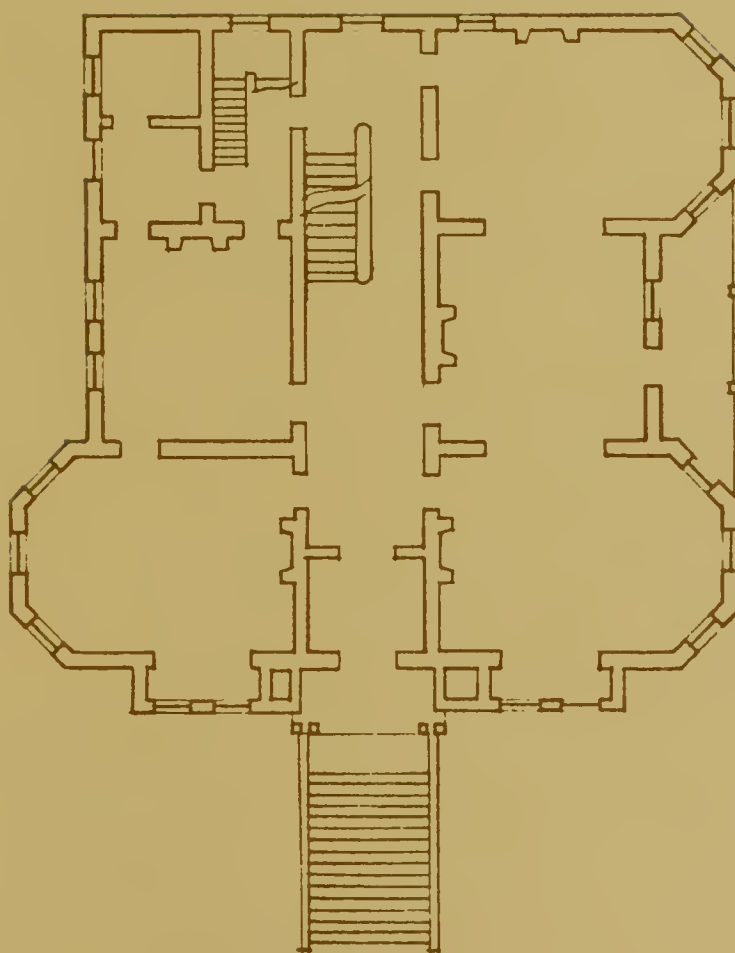
WASHINGTON  
PARK



SITE PLAN  
SHOWING LOCATION  
OF ORIGINAL  
STRUCTURES



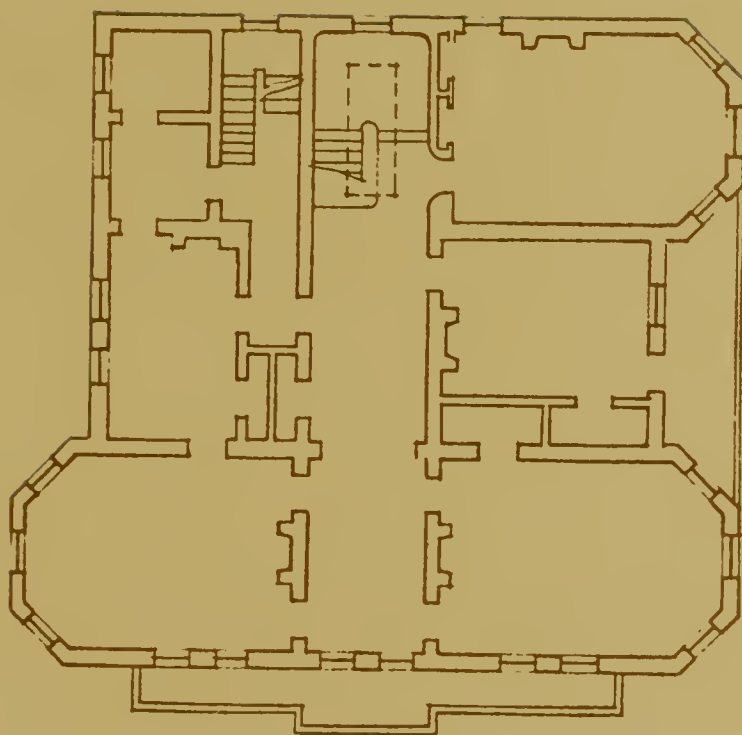




1ST FLOOR PLAN

ORIGINAL ARRANGEMENT





2ND FLOOR PLAN

ORIGINAL ARRANGEMENT



## PART THREE

### DESCRIPTION AND PRESENT PHYSICAL CONDITION OF THE REDDICK MANSION

#### I. DESCRIPTION

##### The Exterior

The Reddick mansion is a two-story, basement and attic residence, with its basement at grade. Above this ground-floor basement rise three stories of rooms and circulation spaces originally devoted entirely to residential purposes. The first floor, intended for living and dining, has rooms elaborately decorated with ornamental plasterwork and fireplaces. Less ostentatious, but nonetheless elegant rooms on the second floor, served for sleeping and dressing. Very plain rooms on the third floor were probably servants' rooms.

The foundations are stone, 20 inches thick, and the exterior walls brick with Lemont limestone trim.<sup>1</sup> Two interior brick bearing walls, 12 inches thick, run in a north-south direction on either side of the center hall. The 14 inch thick exterior walls consist of 8 inches of stone or brick, a 2 inch air space, and a 4 inch lining of studs, wood lath, and plaster. The cornice, including soffits, brackets and window frames, is wood. Window sash and frames elsewhere in the house are also wood, the glass in them being French plate furnished personally by Reddick. The quoins, windowcaps, principal facings, string-courses, columns, and the cornices and columns of the porches,

are Lemont limestone. The balustrades that originally graced the roofs of the bay windows and porch on the south front were also stone.

The roof, now resurfaced with asphalt, was originally tin applied to tongue-and-groove sheathing. Gutters and headers were galvanized metal. Above the stairhall, there was a skylight, now roofed over. Chimney caps were originally ornamental.

### Changes to the Exterior

Only a few changes have been made to the exterior, the most notable being the addition of a chimney on the west side to serve the central heating plant. Other changes are the resurfacing of the roof, the introduction of a fire escape on the east front and the removal of the balustrade from the roofs of the porch and bay windows on the south front.

### Interior Description

The staircase railing is mahogany. Window frames are wood with inside shutters folding into them. All sashes are hung with weights and pulleys.

Cornices and centerpieces are ornamental marble. Heavy-molded wood trim (evidently pine, and probably grained originally) is used for door frames and baseboards. Walls are plaster on wooden lath.

There are many paneled doors and much original hardware in the building. Sliding doors connect the rooms on the east side of the first floor.

## Mechanical Systems

The building is heated by steam. As most of the radiators date from the nineteenth century, it is probable that it was Reddick himself who had the heating system installed. The present heating plant, located about six feet below grade in a ground floor utility room on the west side of the building, has been oil fired since December 1974 when it was converted from gas.

Plumbing is confined to the northwest corner of the building. Electrical wiring originates at circuit-breaker boxes in the utility room and runs in rigid conduit to lighting fixtures and outlets. Most of the lighting is fluorescent, carried in suspended fixtures which were added to the building about 1959. There are approximately six window-mounted room air conditioners installed sometime after 1966.

## Interior Changes (see plans pp. 53-57)

The following changes have been made to the interiors of the mansion:<sup>2</sup>

### 1. Ground Floor

- A. Rectangular openings have been cut through brick bearing walls in the first bay on either side of the entrance hall (1923). The loads are carried on metal columns and steel I-beams.
- B. Partition walls have also been removed between the rooms on the east side of the basement so that the space is continuously open in the shape of an L.

- C. The stairs, originally rising to the first floor in an open well, have been enclosed with a fire wall and door (1966).
- D. Two toilets have been installed at the rear of the hall (dated unknown).
- E. The steam boiler may date from 1925. An architect's report in 1940 recommended replacing it, however, there is no record of the work ever having been done. The exterior chimney may date from the time of the new boiler in 1925. When the furnace was converted to gas in 1963, the existing circuit-breaker boxes were added.

## 2. First Floor

- A. The wall and fireplace between the hall and the room on the southeast corner were removed in 1961. At that time the vestibule walls and doors of the hall were also removed, and an aluminum and glass vestibule was introduced by architect Louis Gerding. The bearing wall above the opening between the hall and the room in the southeast corner is supported by steel I-beams. The marble fireplace removed during these changes is stored on the third floor. It may be that these alterations also necessitated moving the large mirror, now in front of a window in the southeast room, from the hall to its present location.



- B. In the center room on the east side, the door leading to the fire escape replaces a window. The same change occurs in the room above this one on the second floor (date unknown).
- C. An arch was opened in the wall between the two main rooms on the west side sometime before 1923.
- D. In the northwest corner a servants' stairway and a wall have been removed and replaced by an arch (before 1923).
- E. The floors are covered with asbestos vinyl tile (1961).
- F. A handrail was added to the wall opposite the balustrade of the main staircase in the same year (1961).

### 3. Second Floor

- A. The skylight opening on the hall ceiling was covered about 1961. It may originally have been glazed with ornamental glass.
- B. A fire wall was introduced at the top of the stairs in 1966. This installation cuts through the plaster cornice of the hall, and eliminates all balusters (apparently discarded) at the top of the stairs.
- C. In 1923 the bearing walls and fireplaces on either side of the hall were removed in order to create

a continuous space across the south front of the building. The walls above these openings are carried on ten-inch steel I-beams weighing 21.5 pounds per foot. When these changes were made, a partition with double doors was constructed at the north end of the new room. The doors are no longer in place.

- D. The wall between the center and northern rooms on the east side was also opened at that time. The aperture is bridged by an I-beam, in this case supported at either end by four-inch gas pipes.
- E. At the same time (1923) closets were removed from the south end of the center room. In order to avoid disturbing the plaster cornice of that room, the upper parts of the closets were boxed in about a foot or so below the ceiling. The reason for this change, subsequently forgotten, has given rise to erroneous reports that runaway slaves had been concealed in the boxed-in ceiling.
- F. Also in 1923 partitions enclosing closets and a servants' hall on the west side were removed. Several doors were also plastered over at that time. There is a toilet at the end of the servants' hall installed at a very early date.

#### 4. Third Floor

- A. There is a wooden truss in the room in the southwest corner that supports bookcases suspended from it on the floor below. Its weight is carried by the outside walls.

## II. STRUCTURAL AND MECHANICAL CONDITION

### Roof

The present asbestos felt and asphalt twenty-year bonded roof was put on about 1953. Although there are no visible leaks, the roof will probably need attention in the near future.

### Outside Walls

The walls are sound but need tuck-pointing. The stone, and especially the window frames, are desperately in need of paint. Apparently they were last painted in 1963. The window frames and sash also need caulking, puttying, and -- here and there -- replacement of deteriorated wood.

### Interiors

The walls are structurally sound and the floor show minimal deflection despite the heavy loads imposed on them over the years by books and journals. Ceilings and wall surfaces are in excellent condition. The virtual absence of cracks is remarkable and testifies to the stability of the walls.

The main staircase shows a slight settlement on its east side, a condition relatively easy to correct.

The floor covering, of vinyl asbestos tiles, is in poor condition though useable.

### Mechanical Systems

The oil-fired boiler and steam heating system appear to be in good condition. The plumbing is adequate for its present use. Room air conditioners also appear to have adequate capacity.

The electrical system supplying the air conditioners, lighting system, office machines and mechanical equipment, runs in rigid conduit and appears to be entirely adequate for present and anticipated lighting and air conditioning requirements.

### The Caretaker's Residence

This modest dwelling was used as the caretaker's residence until sometime in the 1960's. Since then it evidently has not been heated or maintained.

Its roof leaks badly and needs to be replaced. The eaves are rotted, as are parts of the porch, all of which require the removal and replacement of deteriorated wood, and painting.

The interior walls and ceilings need much attention. Although there is a space for a kitchen, there are no fixtures. The bathroom fixtures and probably all the mechanical systems are inoperative. The building does not appear to have been heated for some years.

## The Grounds

The mansion is lit by spotlights at night. An aluminum and glass display case is placed at the street corner. There are virtually no plantings on the grounds. The lawn, several feet above the grade of the street, is retained by a low wall of Lemont limestone covered by a badly deteriorated concrete cap. The blocks of stone no longer lie in proper alignment.



## NOTES

1. Much of the descriptive information about the Reddick mansion comes from a summary at Reddick's Library of the original specifications (now lost) prepared in the early 1920's by architect Jason F. Richardson Jr.
2. Information derived from plans and remodeling specifications in 1923 by architect Jason F. Richardson Jr. and from later plans and specifications in the files of Reddick's Library.





TOILETS ADDED

WALLS CHANGED  
1963

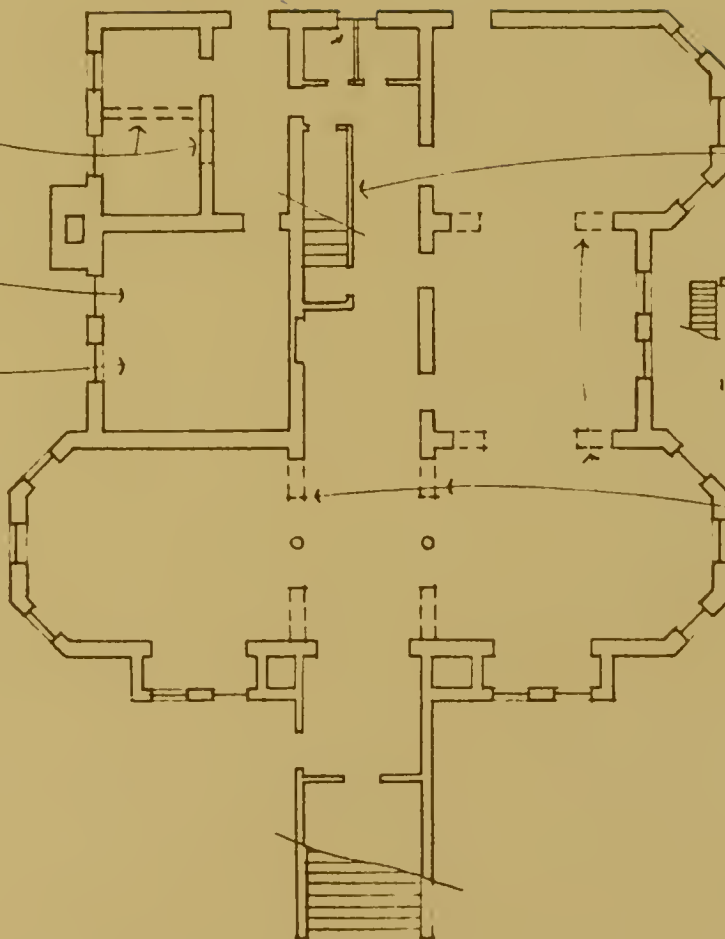
BOILER CONVERTED  
TO GAS 1963 AND  
CONVERTED TO  
OIL 1975

ELECTRICAL WORK  
1963

STAIRS ENCLOSED  
1966

FIRE ESCAPE  
ADDED

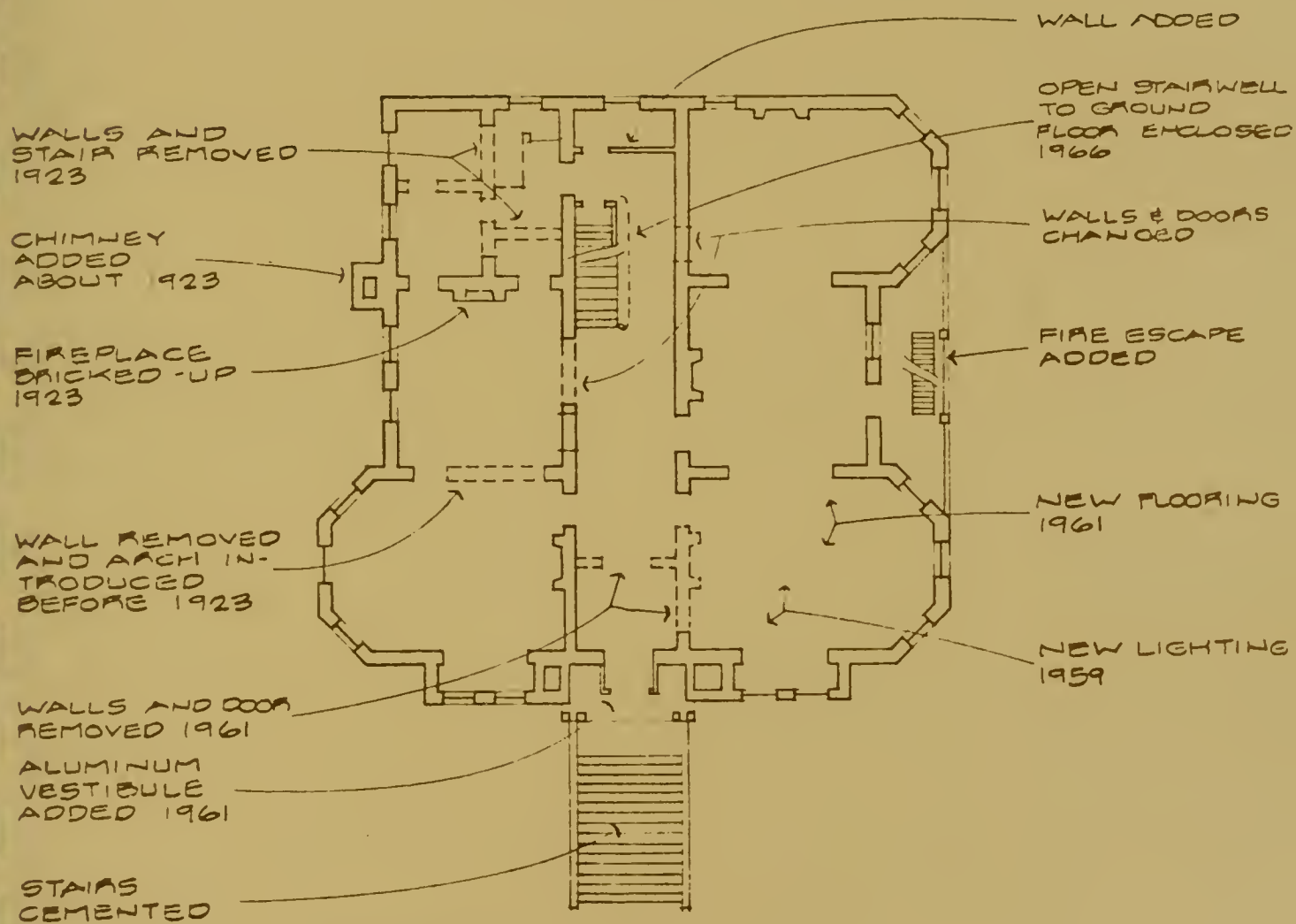
WALLS REMOVED  
1923



GROUND FLOOR PLAN

RECORD OF ALTERATIONS





1ST FLOOR PLAN

RECORD OF ALTERATIONS



TOILET ADDED

EXTERIOR STONE  
& WOOD LAST  
PAINTED 1963

WALL AND STAIR  
TO 1ST FLOOR  
REMOVED 1923

FIREPLACE  
BRICKED-UP 1923

PARTITIONS RE-  
MOVED AND DOOR  
SEALED 1923

WALLS REMOVED  
1923

BALUSTRADE  
REMOVED ABOUT  
1952

HANDRAIL  
ADDED 1961

SKYLIGHT  
SEALED 1961

WALL OPENED  
1923

FIRE PARTITION  
ADDED 1966

BALUSTRADE  
CHANGED TO  
WOOD ABOUT  
1952

PARTITIONS RE-  
MOVED, OPENING  
CHANGED AND  
FALSE CEILING  
ADDED, 1923

2ND FLOOR PLAN

RECORD OF ALTERATIONS



PROPOSED ADAPTIVE USE OF THE REDDICK MANSION

I. OWNERSHIP AND OPERATION

Public Versus Private Use

Having investigated various alternative uses for the Reddick mansion, the consultants conclude that the most suitable and feasible continued use of the building is as a public facility. Although it has been suggested that the property be sold for private use, the consultants believe that private ownership and occupancy is inconsistent with both the great historic and architectural significance of the mansion and with the philanthropic intent of William Reddick when he willed the property to the City of Ottawa for use as a public library.

It is highly unlikely that a private owner would accept the legal encumbrances necessary to insure the continued visual and physical integrity of the structure, or the requirements for continuing public access associated with private ownership of so historic a building. It is also unreasonable to expect a private party to pay the costs of proper restoration. Finally, the consultants find that private ownership and use is simply not feasible because of the high costs of acquisition and rehabilitation.

## Ownership And Operation

The consultants believe that the most feasible arrangements for ownership and operation of the Reddick mansion are as follows:

### 1. Ownership

The City of Ottawa should acquire the building. Municipal ownership conforms more closely to the spirit and intent of the Reddick will than any other kind of ownership. Certain benefits may also accrue to the property if owned by the City of Ottawa: municipal insurance, municipal custodial service, and municipal rates when borrowing money.

### 2. Easements and Covenants

In the interest of assuring the continued preservation of the Reddick mansion, the City of Ottawa should at once encumber the property with such protective covenants and easements as would meet the criteria as established by The National Trust for Historic Preservation or a similar architectural preservation organization. These ought to include deed restrictions specifying that the land will forever be devoted to public use regardless of improvements thereon. Easements should include restrictions on facade alterations and significant changes to interior spaces and ornamental details.

If this is not feasible or acceptable, then the



consultants recommend that the Library Board convey the building for a modest sum to the Reddick Mansion Association with such recommendations and stipulations that the building will permanently be used for those uses as set forth here and after.

### 3. Operation

The entire property should be leased on a long-term basis to a non-profit corporation whose responsibility will be to rehabilitate, restore, maintain and operate the property in the public interest as follows:

- A. Develop a long-range plan for restoration, maintenance and operation of the property.
- B. Raise funds and rehabilitate the buildings.
- C. Maintain the buildings and grounds.
- D. Restore parts of the mansion and its grounds according to the long-range plan.
- E. Operate the buildings in the public interest by:
  - 1. Making certain parts of the mansion available to the public for meetings and other activities.
  - 2. Restoring one room in the house as a period room and granting the public access and providing interpretation at specified times.

F. Sublease certain parts of the building to help defray operating expenses.

#### Role Of The Reddick Mansion Association

The consultants recommend that the City of Ottawa enter into a long-term lease with the Reddick Mansion Association for rehabilitation, restoration, maintenance and operation of the Reddick mansion. The Association, with its broad-based Board of Directors and well-known concern for preserving the building in the public interest, is the most logical lessee.

By leasing the Reddick mansion, the City will avoid the obvious inconvenience of operating yet another building while, at the same time, insuring operation of the mansion in the public interest by persons especially dedicated to preserving the building in adaptative use. In doing this the City will retain ultimate control by virtue of the lease, the conditions of which would be negotiated by the City and the Association.

The building could also be operated by a commission appointed by the Mayor. Such a commission may not have the same intense interest in implementing an adaptive use plan as would the Reddick Mansion Association. The Reddick Mansion Association in being a not-for-profit Public Corporation whose membership controls policy through a Board of Directors, can respond more quickly and effectively to local need than could a commission. The same is true as regards the efforts that will be required to raise funds for the rehabilitation and restoration of the mansion.

## II. PROPOSED USES OF THE RENOVATED SPACES

### Ground Floor

The ground floor lends itself to activities by groups of people. Though not the most attractive space in the building, it is by virtue of its utilitarian character, the most suitable area for hard useage by large groups. Its sizeable open area and adequate exit capacity make it attractive for groups of up to 100 persons.

Meetings, lectures, receptions, parties, dinners, dances and similar functions can be accommodated with ease. Although it is not feasible to provide a full kitchen, there is space on the floor for a small kitchen from which a caterer could serve food prepared elsewhere. The area also lends itself to card parties and similar activities by groups such as senior citizens. Various kinds of exhibitions can also be accommodated including garden club shows, art exhibits and rummage sales by non-profit organizations.

Servicing these activities is easily accomplished through the two rear doors. Tables, chairs, linen and utensils can be stored in the caretaker's residence and carried the fifty feet separating the two buildings as required. Fireproof screens, designed for displaying paintings, prints, fabrics and objects, can also be stored in the same building when not in use in the mansion.

### First Floor

This floor, with its exquisitely decorated rooms, should be

reserved for less intensive uses than the ground floor. In order to reuse the five large ornamental rooms and hallway on this floor, it will first be necessary to replace certain walls, moldings and doors (see plan p. 77). This work will re-establish the original vestibule in the hallway and the integrity of the three major rooms on the east and the two on the west.

The rooms east of the hall should be devoted to public use. The consultants recommend that the Reddick Mansion Association restore the room in the southeast corner -- the most monumental room in the house -- as a period room with appropriate wall paper, rugs, chandelier, draperies and furniture.

The center room on the east side would properly serve as an office for the Association as well as a meeting room for groups of up to 10 persons. The room in the northeast corner is best adapted as a meeting room for groups of up to 17 persons.

The consultants recommend that the rooms on the west side of the hall be leased as offices to a prominent public-oriented non-profit organization. The prestige and prominence of the Reddick mansion combined with its public character would make this space ideal for an organization such as the Ottawa Chamber of Commerce.

### Second Floor

Because it is necessary to use two flights of stairs to reach the second floor, the consultants recommend that this floor be leased to tenants whose business generates relatively less traffic. The spacious rooms on this floor might best

Fund.

### Third Floor

Without extensive improvements this floor would be best used for storage. The aesthetic problems and economic costs of extending the present fire escape to the third floor, or of adding a stair or elevator shaft onto the rear of the building, make any other use of this floor appear unfeasible.

### Lighting

Although lighting fixtures in the building are aesthetically unattractive, they provide adequate lighting and the consultants recommend using the existing fixtures for the time being. Because of the difficulties of locating appropriate period fixtures and chandeliers capable of being adapted to electric light, renewal of the interior lighting should become a part of the long-range restoration plan.

### The Caretaker's House

To renovate and refurbish the interiors of this building for residential or other compatible purposes is economically unfeasible at present. The consultants therefore recommend that for the time being the exterior fabric of the building be stabilized and the house be used for storing tables, chairs, linen, utensils, exhibition screens and the like. The proposed long-range plan should address itself to the best long-term use of this building.

### III. ALTERATIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS

#### Interiors

In order to operate the building as proposed, certain alterations and improvements are required. The consultants recommend that this work be restricted to:

1. Stabilizing and securing the mansion and caretaker's house.
2. Rearranging interior space in the mansion by replacing most original partitions and adding several new ones (see plans pp. 75-81).
3. Refurbishing interior finishes, including new floor coverings, and patching and repainting walls and ceilings.
4. Adding new toilet facilities to the ground and second floors (see plans pp. 75, 79).
5. Adding a small serving kitchen on the ground floor (see plan p. 75).

Because of the highly ornamental character of the rooms and hall on the first floor, it is recommended that work on this floor include some restoration. Walls that are replaced should be of original thickness and should be trimmed with baseboards and doorframes having profiles duplicating those of the originals. Missing doors ought also to be replaced with authentic reproductions. The marble fireplace, now stored on the third floor, should be returned to its original position in the room



on the southeast corner.

### Fixture and Furnishings

The consultants recommend purchase of only the most essential furniture and furnishings for the public areas of the mansion. Much of this may, in fact, be donated. Undoubtedly, considerable local interest will be generated when it comes to restoring and furnishing the mansion and it is likely that many persons will wish to donate appropriate furniture and period pieces for use and display in the house.

### Exteriors

The exterior requires immediate attention to repair and repaint window frames and sash! The brickwork should also be tuck-pointed, the stone and wood of the cornice repainted, and a new layer of asphalt and felt added to the roof. The same work is also needed to stabilize the caretaker's residence and prevent further decay.

### Sitework

Expenditures for sitework should also be kept to a minimum until the restoration plan is complete. Some work is necessary at once, however, among which the consultants especially recommend tuck-pointing and stabilizing the brick wall on the western edge of the property and removing the aluminum-and-glass display box on the street corner.

It would also be beneficial to plant young trees on the north and west lawns and in the berms between the sidewalk and street. If not planted between the house and sidewalks on the

south and east, these trees should complement future landscaping proposals.

#### IV. BUDGET FOR REHABILITATION

##### Budget

The present cost of sitework, exterior stabilization and maintenance, interior partitioning, and renovation is estimated as follows:

Interiors	\$ 53,500
Furniture and Furnishings	5,000
Exteriors	14,000
Sitework	3,000
Professional Fees & Services	7,000
Total	<hr/> \$ 82,500

##### Financing The Rehabilitation

The consultants recommend that costs of rehabilitation be met by the Reddick Mansion Association, the not-for-profit corporation recommended as lessee. The potential sources of funding are:

1. Gifts and donations from individuals, corporations and foundations.
2. Gifts in kind of materials and labor by businesses and individuals.
3. Matching funds through the National Register and from federal programs.



4. Contributions by state and local governments from Revenue Sharing and general revenues.
5. Borrowing.

The consultants believe that because of the outstanding historical significance of William Reddick and his residence for the people of Ottawa, LaSalle County and Illinois, the Reddick Mansion Association will be able to raise the capital funds necessary to renovate the mansion for the purposes suggested.

## V. RESTORATION

### Areas Requiring Restoration

Certain parts of the mansion and its grounds deserve to be restored rather than merely rehabilitated. As none of these areas require immediate attention, this work is properly postponed until the proposed long-range plan is formulated. They include:

1. Rebuilding and stabilizing the stone wall along the sidewalks. This work should include refabricating the original iron fence.
2. Stabilizing the exterior stonework of the mansion and caretaker's house, and replacing pieces where necessary.
3. Restoring the room on the southeast corner of the first floor as a period room.

4. Replacing the skylight and reopening and reglazing the ceiling of the hall between the second and third floors.
5. Replacing the balustrades on the roofs of the bay windows and porch of the south side.
6. Replacing lighting fixtures with period fixtures wired for electric lighting and, where appropriate, with modern lighting systems.
7. Restoring the original floors.

#### Financing the Restoration

The consultants recommend that the Reddick Mansion Association assume responsibility for commissioning a long-range master plan and for restoring the mansion as funds become available. Surpluses of income over operating costs should be placed in a special restoration fund. Donations made to the Association specifically for restoration should also go directly into that fund. Special campaigns to raise money for restoring the mansion will generate additional funds. Matching funds for restoration are also available through the National Register program. Revenue sharing funds contributed by the City of Ottawa represent another source of funding the restoration.

#### VI. ANNUAL OPERATING COSTS

##### Basis For The Estimates

The estimates that follow are based on:

1. Examination of the records of the Reddick Library.
2. Interviews with local persons knowledgeable in insurance and real estate.
3. Interviews with municipal officials.
4. Experience with similar projects elsewhere in the Midwest.

All estimates are intentionally conservative and, in practice, the consultants believe that expenses will prove somewhat lower, and income higher, than projected.

Estimated Expenses

YEARLY OPERATING COST

Utilities (Fuel oil, electricity, water)	\$ 2,800
Insurance (Liability, fire, hazard)	1,600
Maintenance (Current and long-range)	2,100
Custodial Service and Supplies	<u>6,800</u>
Estimated Yearly Operating Cost	\$ 13,300

If the City of Ottawa, in acquiring, owning and leasing the building, is able to assist with custodial service and insurance, the annual operating cost can be substantially reduced as follows:

YEARLY OPERATING COST WITH  
ASSISTANCE FROM THE CITY OF OTTAWA

Utilities	\$ 2,800.00
Insurance (As part of entire city policy)	0
Maintenance	2,100.00
Custodial Service and Supplies (as part of entire city service)	0
Total Yearly Operating Cost	<u>\$ 4,900.00</u>

I. ANNUAL INCOME

Rental Income

Estimated rentals, given in dollars per square foot per year, are based on discussions with local realtors. These figures, intentionally conservative, take into account current rentals elsewhere in Ottawa, the present depressed rental market, and the high visibility and other amenities afforded sub-lessees renting space in Reddick mansion. The projected rents include the use of meeting rooms, and utilities and custodial services; they do not include office furniture and furnishings.

	<u>Year</u>	<u>Month</u>
1. <u>First Floor</u> (west side, three rooms)		
a. 820 sq. ft. @ 3.50 per sq. ft.	\$2,870.00	\$240.00
2. <u>Second Floor</u> (west side, two rooms)		
a. 580 sq. ft. @ 3.00 per sq. ft.	1,740.00	145.00
3. <u>Second Floor</u> (east side, three rooms)		
a. 375 sq. ft. @ 3.00 per sq. ft.	1,125.00	94.00
b. 270 sq. ft. @ 3.00 per sq. ft.	810.00	68.00
c. 365 sq. ft. @ 3.00 per sq. ft.	<u>1,095.00</u>	91.00
Total Estimated Annual Rental Income	\$7,640.00	

## Fees

The consultants recommend that meeting rooms and the large room on the ground floor be made available without charge to local non-profit groups for meetings and similar functions. For more elaborate affairs, especially those for which a charge is made by the sponsoring organization -- as might be the case for receptions, dinners, dances, exhibitions, and parties -- the Association should charge a fee. A fee should also be assessed whenever extraordinary utilities or custodial service is anticipated

## Estimated Annual Income

Rentals (Based on 80% Rented)	\$ 6,112.00
Fees (For use of public space)	<u>2,000.00</u>
Total Annual Income	\$ 8,112.00

## III. PROJECTED OPERATING COSTS VERSUS INCOME

If the City of Ottawa assists with insurance and custodial service, it is apparent that the annual operating costs can be met and a surplus generated to assist in funding the restoration:

## Operating Costs Versus Income

### CITY ASSISTANCE

Income	\$ 8,112.00
Operating Costs	<u>4,900.00</u>
Yearly Surplus for Restoration	\$ 3,212.00

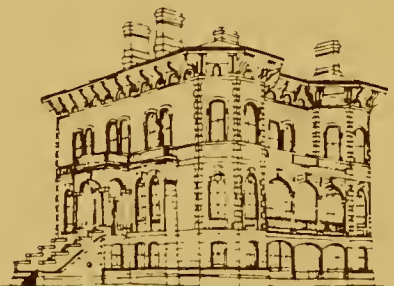
## Operating Costs Versus Income

### WITHOUT CITY ASSISTANCE

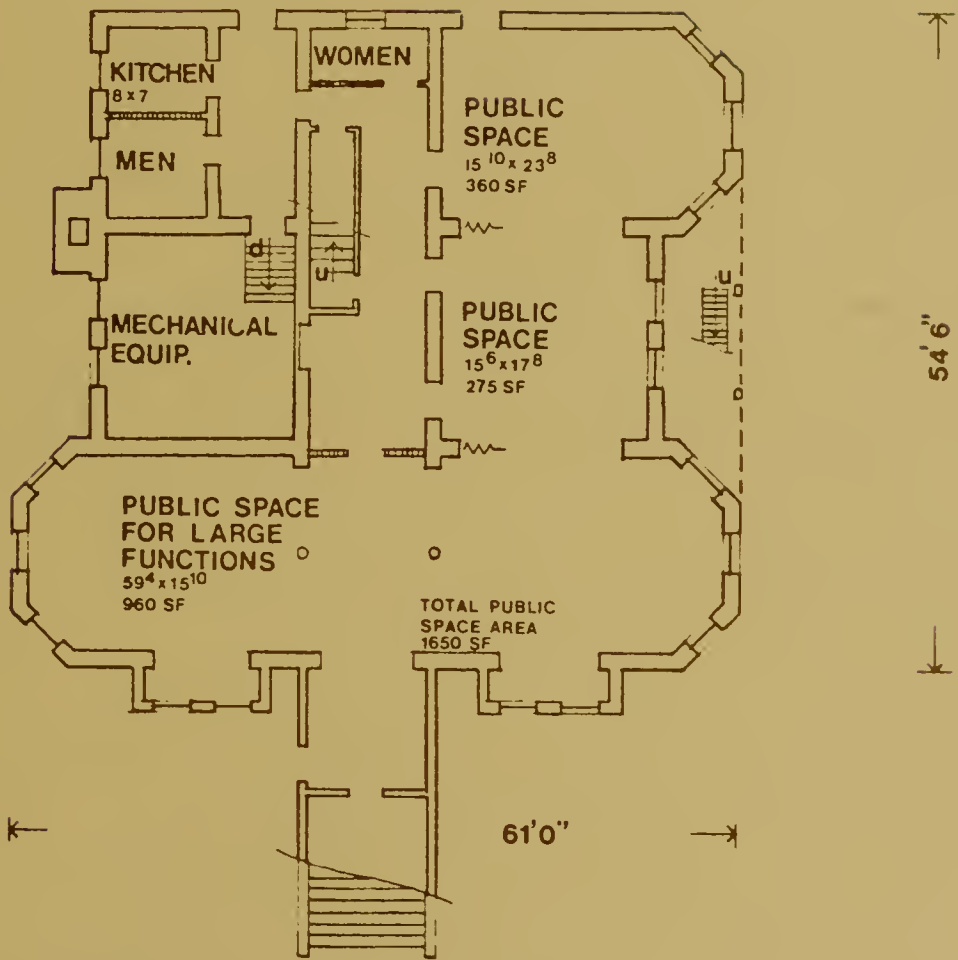
Operating Costs	\$13,000.00
Income	<u>8,112.00</u>
Yearly Deficit	\$ 5,188.00
(To be recovered by annual fund raising)	

Although the first alternative is obviously the more attractive, the consultants believe that the second possibility is also entirely feasible. Given the potential for extensive use of the mansion without charge by local non-profit groups, the consultants believe that sufficient community support will materialize to close, and even exceed, the projected gap between income and expenses.

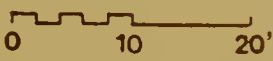
Ownership and operation of the Reddick mansion as proposed in this report will thus preserve for the citizens of Ottawa and Illinois an exceedingly valuable part of their cultural heritage while at the same time making available to the entire community a useful and needed public facility as a continuing memorial to William Reddick.



# REDDICK MANSION



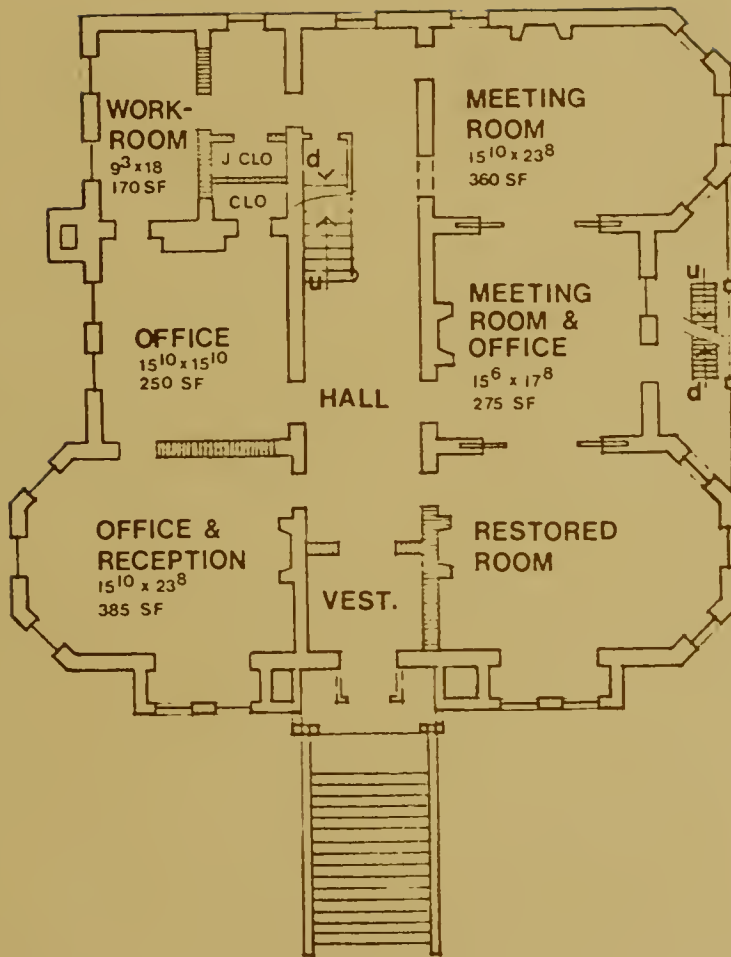
 GROUND FLOOR PLAN



PROPOSED CHANGES AND USE



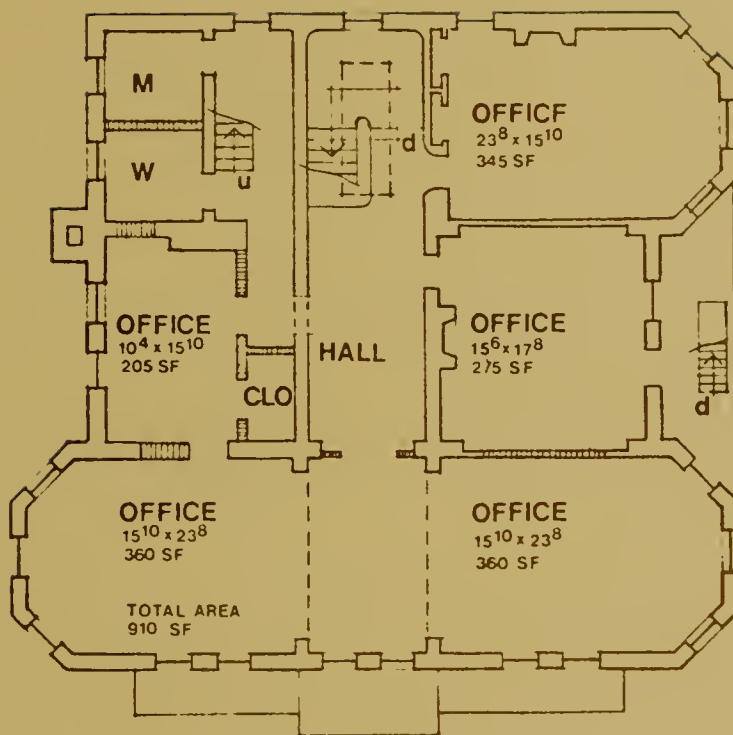




1ST FLOOR PLAN

PROPOSED CHANGES AND USE

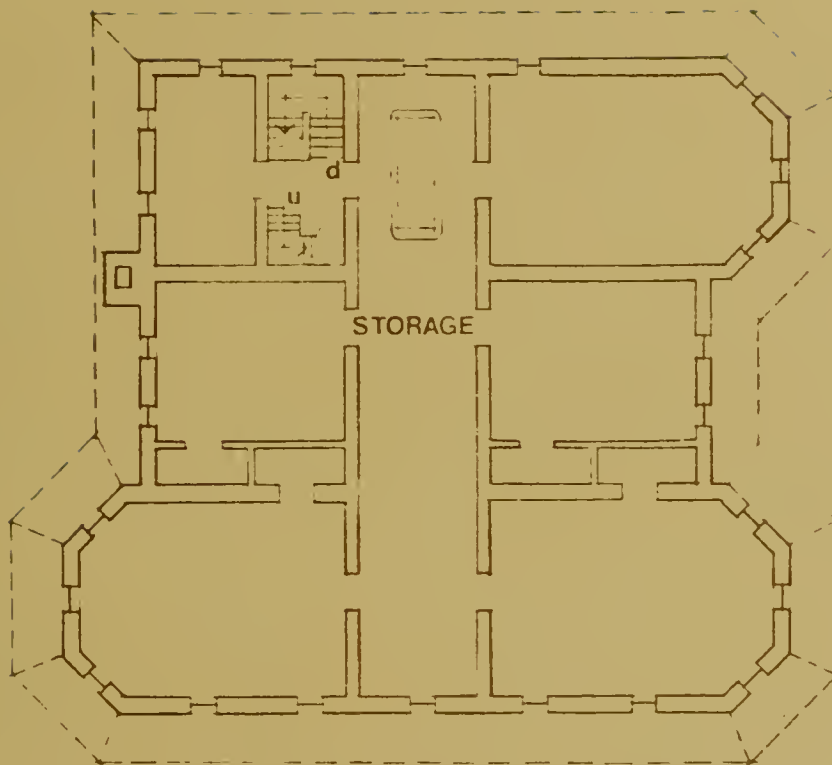




2ND FLOOR PLAN

PROPOSED CHANGES AND USE





3RD FLOOR PLAN

PROPOSED USE





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